

*For Immediate Release*

## **New Youth Offender Program Shows Promise**

Pendleton, IN (March 31, 2010) - A new program has been instituted at Pendleton Juvenile Correctional Facility. In collaboration with the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), students at Pendleton are being given a unique opportunity to receive training and develop skills in welding and steel fabrication under the USDOL Apprenticeship Program.



Students selected to begin the Welding Apprenticeship Program will receive training in cleaning and grinding metal to prepare it for welding and cutting and assembling steel for various projects. Currently, with a shortage of welders, this program gives juvenile offenders the opportunity to learn valuable skills that can result in a good paying job and career once they are released from the IDOC.

Some typical projects that the students will be working on are gates and panels to enhance the security of the facility as well as any other projects that the physical plant will be completing that can safely be completed with a student without causing security concerns.

Collaboration started between the Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC) PEN Products and the USDOL Office of Apprenticeship in 2006. The initial focus of this effort was to provide offenders the opportunity to receive a nationally recognized Certificate of Completion for skills learned while being enrolled in a registered apprenticeship program. Positive results of this effort have led to a continued expansion within the IDOC with over 70 programs being registered and a continuing effort to expand opportunities for both offenders and staff.

State Director John Delgado of the USDOL said the "Indiana Department of Correction leads the nation in active registered apprenticeship programs." He went on to say "no other state has embraced registered apprenticeship programs for both offenders and staff like Indiana has and this will have a positive impact on Indiana efforts to reduce the recidivism rate of Indiana's offenders."

Although students aren't usually incarcerated long enough to complete the entire 800 hour course, upon release students will be issued a Transcript of Training through PEN Products which will outline the total hours of completion and skill sets that the youth has accomplished while in the program. Every effort will also be made to connect the youth with a community-based apprenticeship program in which they can complete the remaining apprenticeship training hours.

Mike Dempsey, Executive Director of Youth Services for IDOC stated, "The combined efforts between the IDOC and the USDOL to establish apprenticeship programs throughout the Department is proving to be a valuable asset and one that is making a major difference in the lives of the youth entrusted to our care. The welding program and other apprenticeship programs are providing both adult and juveniles with basic vocational skills and experience that they can use to turn their lives around and provide them with opportunities to succeed and contribute to society upon release."

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